

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace a paragraph, lines 5-9, page 7, with the following amended paragraph:

The present invention is drawn to compounds, which bind to and modulate the activity of a GPCR referred to herein as MCH, and uses thereof. The term MCH, as used herein, includes the human sequences found in GeneBank accession number NM_005297 (**SEQ ID NOs: 1 and 2**), naturally-occurring allelic variants, mammalian orthologs, biologically active fragments and recombinant mutants thereof.

Please replace a paragraph, line 16, page 79 through line 7, page 80 with the following amended paragraph:

Mammalian MCH (19 amino acids) (**SEQ ID NO: 3**) is highly conserved between rat, mouse, and human, exhibiting 100% amino acid identity, but its physiological roles are less clear. MCH has been reported to participate in a variety of processes including feeding, water balance, energy metabolism, general arousal/attention state, memory and cognitive functions, and psychiatric disorders. For reviews, see 1. Baker, Int. Rev. Cytol. 126:1-47 (1991); 2. Baker, TEM 5:120-126 (1994); 3. Nahon, Critical Rev. in Neurobiol 221:221-262, (1994); 4. Knigge et al., Peptides 18(7):1095-1097, (1996). The role of MCH in feeding or body weight regulation is supported by Qu et al., Nature 380:243-247, (1996), demonstrating that MCH is over expressed in the hypothalamus of ob/ob mice compared with ob/+mice, and that fasting further increased MCH mRNA in both obese and normal mice during fasting. MCH also stimulated feeding in normal rats when injected into the lateral ventricles as reported by Rossi et al., Endocrinology 138:351-355, (1997). MCH also has been reported to functionally antagonize the behavioral effects of α -MSH; see: Miller et al., Peptides 14:1-10, (1993); Gonzalez et al., Peptides 17:171-177, (1996); and Sanchez et al., Peptides 18:3933-396, (1997). In addition,

stress has been shown to increase POMC mRNA levels while decreasing the MCH precursor preproMCH (ppMCH) mRNA levels; Presse et al., Endocrinology 131:1241-1250, (1992). Thus MCH can serve as an integrative neuropeptide involved in the reaction to stress, as well as in the regulation of feeding and sexual activity; Baker, Int. Rev. Cytol. 126:1-47, (1991); Knigge et al., Peptides 17:1063-1073, (1996).